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used to denote the Ezo chiefs and from once having the same meaning as a commander came to be used merely in the sense of a village headman. *Hokkai Zuihitsu* says, "The chief of an Ezo village is called *Otona* which is the same as village chief on the mainland. Orders to the *Otona* from the Matsumae may be carried out with authority since the Ezo all obey the *Otona*." Here we have a main problem in controlling the Ezo. The Japanese stake in the relationship lay in trade. The Matsumae stake also lay in trade but in a peaceful trade and a trade to the advantage of the Japanese. Since even before the 1669 revolt it had been necessary that the Ezo be dominated only in the trade aspect, there was no need, after that revolt, when the main interest was still peaceful trade, that the Matsumae system should undergo a sudden change. What was to happen was that as political control increased so did suppression. The system was basically the same as in the days of Kazizaki Suehiro. The chief of a village was the *Otona* who ruled under the head *Otona* who in turn was appointed by the Matsumae and through whom the orders of the Matsumae came. In this system the *Otona* was a chief or man of influence elected according to the custom of the Ezo. From the *Mōjin Seia Dan* [Remarks of an ignorant man on the Ezo]:

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From early days it was the custom of the Ezo not to appoint their chief but to give the title of chief to him who was recommended by all the people and who was usually the richest man in the village looking after his fellow villagers. In this manner disputes were avoided.³⁶

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In Ezo, from very early times, they never had a general leader but in each village there was a leader similar to a headman in Japan who rules the village. Although some consideration was given to blood relationship those with power naturally became the leader. Recently the Matsumae gave Tobitake instructions on how to rule his people. Tobitake had with him 200 followers and was told that any rebellious Ezo under his control were to be reported immediately to the Matsumae while the chief, in the presence of an official and an interpreter was to gather the rebels and deliver punishment.

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These above quotations are good examples of Matsumae policy after 1669.

There may be some misunderstanding of this system because of the fact that the native ruler was selected from among those Ezo elected by their own people but this is cleared up by a passage from the *SGM*: "In Ezo those who were respected were not necessarily those of noble birth nor of rich family but those of good character. Even for personal matters men of good character were called upon." After the death of Tobitake, a chief of east Ezo who lived in Shikotsu and was equal to chief Chikomotain of Shiriuchi, the Matsumae appointed Chibeka of the same village as his successor.³⁷

³⁶ *Seikai* (The World), No. 91: 68.

³⁷ "Key men in Ezo,

West Ezo—the head man is Matabe of Ishikari.

East Ezo—Tobitake was chief but after his death ten years ago Chibeka of the same village is acting as chief since Tobitake's son is underage." *Matsumae Ezo Ki*.

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taught the moral law should be left alone and treated like beasts. Measures should be undertaken gradually.⁶⁷

Thus opinion blocked any hasty attempt to alter customs while for their part the Ezo also opposed such change stating that they would be "punished by ancestral gods"⁶⁸ and that, "the punishment of God would be unavoidable."⁶⁹ There were natives who attempted to flee to Matsumae or to the mountains and natives like those at Horoizumi *Basho* who, after being treated with sake and then having shaved their heads, were ostracized by their companions.⁷⁰

The Bakufu thereupon took a more passive attitude towards this problem. When in January, 1789, one of their agents, without the approval of his superiors but on the request of the natives, helped the Nemuro Ezo to change their customs, the Bakufu ordered him to submit a detailed account.⁷¹ Further, when in 1802 East Ezo became a permanent domain of the central government and the Hakodate Magistracy was established, the policy of forcing change was dropped and, when it was understood that the Ezo disliked agriculture, only the Japanese in the area were encouraged in that pursuit and the natives were excused from it.⁷²

⁶⁷ Uchida Ginzō, "Arata ni hakken seraretaru Baba Masamichi no ichi icho ni tsuite" (On the newly found will of Baba Masamichi), *Kokumin Keizai Zasshi* 21 (2).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ezo Shōshi* 2.

⁷⁰ "When I visited the island, I came to a place called Shiroy where a native by the name of Asakao brought me a horse on which I was to travel. Now this Ezo was a clever person and was able to understand Japanese to a certain extent. . . . I fell into a conversation with him and tried to learn something of his people. He lamented the fact that the Bakufu officials were too strict and that trade was conducted with little consideration for anything but rigid regulations. Among other matters, he mentioned that, although it might not be desirable for Ezo customs to differ from those of the Japanese, nevertheless the customs of his people had been handed down to them from the gods of their ancestors. Therefore, should his people attempt to alter their ways now, they would certainly be punished by their gods. Thus speaking, the native gave vent to a genuine fear of invoking divine wrath. . . ." Baba Masamichi, *Chōyōron*: "The Ezo were thus afraid of having to shave their heads and trembled at hearing that their customs were to be changed. When the land was placed directly under the Bakufu and the natives were ordered to shave their heads, there was not one Ezo willing to do so. It was said among them that as a last resort to avoid having their heads shaved, they could escape to Matsumae territory or take to the hills. All in all, the Ezo seemed to be quite worried. When a young man at Horoizumi agency was persuaded to shave his head and follow Japanese customs and was given rice and sake, his relations deplored it saying that to die of illness, though a sorrowful thing, cannot be avoided, but that he who shaves his head and alters his traditional appearance and who cannot associate with his fellows is sure to receive punishment from the gods. He will not be accepted in Ezo society and will, probably in desperation, turn evil." *Ezo Shōshi* 3.

⁷¹ *Kyume Kōki*, Suppl. 5 Nemuro Basho Ijin Fūzoku Kaikogi ni tsuki moshiaige sōrō kakitsuke (Report on the changing of Ezo customs at Nemuro Basho).

⁷² Written instruction to managers departing in the year Inu: The primary policy in Ezo is that of control of the island. As